

DMH EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT – MARK PARRA

Continuing our stories that spotlight LACDMH employees who shine, this week we're featuring...



MARK PARRA

**Health Program Analyst II, Countywide Housing, Employment and Education
Resource Development (CHEERD)**

For almost 16 years, Mark Parra has worked for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH). He started in the Training Division, conducting Diversity/Unlearning Prejudice trainings, and then coordinated LACDMH's HIV Mental Health Services grant while at the Office of the Medical Director. After a few years, he moved into his current analyst role at CHEERD.

Working as an analyst at CHEERD, Mark assists with contract implementation, budget analysis, data collection and reporting, and program implementation and evaluation. He is also a floor warden for the safety team, serves as an American Indian representative to Systems Leadership Team (SLT), and conducts Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings.

What do you like about your job? "I like the variety of the tasks I encounter on a daily basis. Each of the projects on my plate involves consulting with all bureaus/divisions of LACDMH, including Human Resources, Financial Services Bureau, Admin Services Bureau, Contracts Division and Revenue Management. I've learned much from the staff that work within these areas."

Who/what inspires you? "The people that I work with at Countywide Housing inspire me. Seeing how their hard work and passion results in helping individuals that are homeless get into permanent housing and bettering their lives fills me with pride. Many staff at LACDMH have helped me make the connection between what we do and how it positively influences lives. Above all, I really like our recovery-based mission and the active inclusion of consumers in shaping our service delivery."

What quote inspires you? “One recovery-related quote I heard years ago was attributed to Dr. Maya Angelou, who said: ‘When I stopped being a victim, I stopped being an accomplice...’ I try to remember that each of us is part of a solution, and we have a chance to be an active part of that solution, to make a better world and better ourselves in the process.”

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? “I learned how to roller skate a few years ago — an integral part of my stress reduction. Also, I do yoga actively, several times a week for spiritual maintenance and physical fitness. Hiking is also important to me. It is truly amazing how many serene and beautiful aspects of nature in Los Angeles can reveal themselves if you know where to look.”

Any words of wisdom for other DMH employees? “Don’t sweat the small stuff, keep it real, and remember to take care of yourselves while taking care of others. It is important to develop a plan of self-care to help provide balance!”